

## Border / frontier cities: between communication and fragmentation

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# Border / Frontier Cities: Between Communication and Fragmentation

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**Abstract.** *The globalisation phenomenon led to the relaxation of borders all over the world. But, at the same time it generated the appearance of invisible frontiers which may create deeper fragmentations inside the society. Apart from the national states, the cities are also markers of identity and places where the ethnic, religious, social, economic differences are more sensible. The present article tackles the issue of frontier / border cities in order to highlight the differences between them and to analyse how the border / frontier affect their development.*

**Key words:** *city, border, frontier, the EU, globalisation*

## Introduction

Although we live in a globalised world, thus an interconnected and even frontier less society, borders are now more important than ever. They stand as geographical, physical delimitations between two national states or two international identities (for example the frontier between Romania and the Republic of Moldova is also the frontier between the EU and Moldova). They are also identity markers, since within the borders we can speak about different identities that separate the ones from inside from the ones from outside. One example in this sense can be the Ukrainian crisis which once again emphasised the delimitation between the East and the West or between the Europeans and non-Europeans. Once it erupted, it put pressure on the securitisation of the EU's and NATO's external frontiers that were preoccupied for the national security of their member states. Another example in the case of the EU's external borders is the current migrants' crisis from the Middle East, especially Syria that search for asylum in the EU. Given the aforementioned examples, the EU was more than once accused of being a fortress that develops visible and invisible fences for the non-EU citizens. Nowadays, the regional dynamics reached a critical point and the migrants are putting the EU in face of a crucial option in which its member states have to decide their immediate and medium strategies regarding the thousands of migrants' families that try to enter its borders. This decision is even more difficult to take taking into consideration the EU's image as a normative power that fights for human rights protection. At the same time, the organisation comes with another challenge, the one of internal frontiers that created different identities even from within<sup>3</sup>. On one hand, we have the traditional national borders that delimit the national

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<sup>3</sup> Cristina-Maria Dogot and Ioan Horga, "Enlargement Process, Classic Geopolitics, and EU Internal Priorities," in *Eurolimes 14, Enlargements, Borders and the Changes of EU Political Priorities*, ed. Ariane Landuyt et al. (Oradea: Oradea University Press/Bruylant, Autumn 2012), 161-180.

sovereignty of a member state, and one the other, there is the Euro zone's frontier that separates the countries that use the Euro as their currency from the others that did not adopt the euro yet by choice or by objective, economical and procedural reasons. The EU also presents itself with the Schengen area, a region in which the national control borders are lifted. To all these over layered identities, the national states confront themselves with their internal frontiers / limits which are caused by multiple reasons like: economic disparities, social exclusion / inclusion, and ethnic characteristics. Last, but not least, we cannot exclude from this analysis the Article 4 of the Lisbon Treaty which clearly stipulates the competences of the Member states to which the EU is not interfering. Among them the national security, the local and the regional self-government remain in the sole exclusive responsibility of the Member states, adding a new layer to the aforementioned identities<sup>4</sup>.

To these national and organisational borders / frontiers, there can be added the transversal ones, which go beyond the national jurisdiction<sup>5</sup>. An example in this sense could be the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights which is administered by the World Trade Organization and it allows certain professionals to move beyond the national borders. But this liberty creates a new frontier which is even harder to be penetrated than the actual fences from certain national borders because for example poor migrants or the asylum seekers do not benefit from this opportunity, creating thus a separation line between the first group and the last<sup>6</sup>. This is also the case of the current migrant crisis that cannot enter the EU who are clearly separated from the professionals that are coming from the Middle East into Europe.

The present article will tackle the issue of borders / frontiers in the European continent, making references and analysing different meanings of the two concepts both internally and externally. The importance of the subject lays in the fact that the existence of borders / frontiers generates a different even an antagonistic position between us and them, fact that within a state and more importantly, within a city creates divisions that affects the social, economic and political development and stability of that particular city. The frontier cities present themselves with the characteristic of the states in which they are located, but also some of the ones that are present beyond the state's national borders.

### ***Borders and frontiers***

According to the common meaning, the border and the frontier are two concepts which are often confused in different languages around the globe. For example in English the terms are "frontier, boundary, borderland, limit; in French they are la frontière, la limite, fins and confins; in Italian la frontiera, il confine, termini; in Spanish la frontera, el limite, el confin; in German die Mark, die Grenze (and the derivatives Grenzgebiet, Grenzraum); in Slavic (e.g. Polish) granica ('border') and pogranicze ('borderland'), miedza ('baulk', absorbed into Hungarian as megye), rubież ('frontier'), kresy ('ends, distant extent'), formerly also kraina (East-Slavic ukraj, ukraina, 'land on the outskirts, on

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<sup>4</sup> *The Lisbon Treaty of the European Union*, Article 4, accessed August 3, 2015, <http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty/treaty-on-european-union-and-comments/title-1-common-provisions/5-article-4.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Ioan Horga, "Multilevel Governance (Mlg) and Subsidiary Principle in White Paper of Mlg of the Committee of the Region (CoR)," in *Regional and Cohesion Policy – Insights Into the Role of the Partnership Principle in the New Policy Design*, ed. Ioan Horga et al. (Debrecen University Press & Oradea University Press, 2011), 158-164.

<sup>6</sup> Saskia Sassen, "When the Center no Longer Holds: Cities as Frontier Zones," *Cities* (2012): 3, accessed August 3, 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2012.05.007>.

the edge'”) and in Romanian graniță (border), frontier (frontier)<sup>7</sup>. All of them suggest the existence of a limit, of a demarcation point between *x* and *y*, but do not make the difference between border and frontier.

Although the concept of border makes more reference towards the geographical point of view and indicates the separation for security reasons and not only, since the Roman Empire it also implied the need for further cooperation or communication with the exterior: “Along history the borders didn't stop individuals and societies to communicate, communication didn't stop at the border, it was more a threshold where communication took place at a lower level. Inside and outside the borders there were different group identities which changed in size over time, changed their mentalities, their image about one another, while communicating<sup>8</sup>”. This need was accelerated over time given the complex interdependences that emerged between neighbouring states, especially since they developed what Barry Buzan called a regional security complex, a situation in which the security of one unit cannot be separated by the security of another<sup>9</sup>.

While the concept of border is generally used to highlight the geographical borders, the concept of frontier refers to other kinds of delimitation, such as the ethnic, political, religious, social ones. In order to highlight the difference between the two, during this study, we will analyse different cities from Europe, EU and non-EU ones.

The choice of analysing cities and not states is not by accident, since in our view they represent a new frontier zone, in which they have to deal with the internal conflicts, diversity and international vulnerabilities. Along history they had to tackle these issues and to become an integrated and functional city, so that they started to transform the actual military conflicts into opportunities of commerce and dialogue<sup>10</sup>. Examples in this sense can be the border cities, which must continue to be operational, although at inter-state level there are some diplomatic, political tensions (the Romania border city of Oradea and the Hungarian one of Debrecen<sup>11</sup>, that continue to have interactions despite the current diplomatic tension between Romania and Hungary<sup>12</sup>).

From an economic point of view, “these cities, whether in the global north or south have become a strategic frontier zone for global corporate capital. Much of the work of forcing deregulation, privatization, and new fiscal and monetary policies on the host governments had to do with creating the formal instruments to construct their equivalent of the old military “fort” of the historic frontier: the regulatory environment they need in

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<sup>7</sup> Andrzej Janeczek, „Frontiers and Borderlands in Medieval Europe,” *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* (2011): 8, accessed August 3, 2015, [http://vistulana.pl/uploads/files/Q16\\_wstep\\_introduction.pdf](http://vistulana.pl/uploads/files/Q16_wstep_introduction.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Dana Pantea, “Cross Border Politics and Its Image in the European Union,” *Eurotimes* 4, *Europe from Exclusive Borders to Inclusive Frontiers*, ed. Gerard Delanty et al. (Oradea: Oradea University Press, Autumn 2007), 144-145.

<sup>9</sup> Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers. The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Studies in International Relations, 2003), 44.

<sup>10</sup> Sassen, “When the Center,” 3.

<sup>11</sup> Ioan Horga and Constantin Vasile Țoca, “Sociological Research. Thinking the Future Together: The Debrecen+Oradea Cross-border Agglomeration,” in *Neighbours and Partners on the Two Sides of the Borders*, ed. István Süli-Zakar (Debrecen: University of Debrecen Press, 2008), 73-83.

<sup>12</sup> „Tensiunile diplomatice între România și Ungaria continuă. Ponta, mesaj dur pentru Budapesta” [The Diplomatic Tensions between Romania and Hungary continue. Ponta, tough message for Budapest], *Realitatea.net*, 11 August 2015, accessed august 20, 2015, [http://www.realitatea.net/tensiunile-diplomatice-intre-romania-si-ungaria-continua-ponta-mesaj-dur-pentru-budapesta\\_1766993.html](http://www.realitatea.net/tensiunile-diplomatice-intre-romania-si-ungaria-continua-ponta-mesaj-dur-pentru-budapesta_1766993.html).

city after city worldwide to ensure a global space of operations.”<sup>13</sup> Additionally these cities come with other frontiers from an economic point of view, like the custom control that checks the goods which are entering the respective city if they are not part of Schengen area or other likewise agreement.

From an identity point of view, large cities tend to create rather local identities, which may or may not diminish the ethnical tensions, especially in relation with other large cities. In general this is the case of capitals, since they encompass a large diversity of ethnic identities. At the same time, these cities, being at the median way between the national level and the local level, not so big as a country or as a region, but not so small as a medium and small city, represent an opportunity for the disadvantaged part of the population, since they “have also become a strategic frontier zone for those who lack power, those who are disadvantaged, outsiders, discriminated minorities”<sup>14</sup>.

At the other side, there will be analysed the border cities, the cities that are at the borderline between two states. Regarding these cities, there must be said, that unlike the frontier cities that create / present / develop invisible frontiers, nowadays the border cities tend to transform the geographical delimitation into an opportunity of cross-border cooperation. But this is a positive result if the regional setting is characterised by a high level of security and predictability. In this situation the neighbouring states does not necessarily cooperate with each other, but at the same time they do not form a regional security complex characterised by an enmity. An example in this sense could be the European Union member states and their border regions / cities. On the other side, we can witness a regional setting like the one between Afghanistan and Pakistan or the Middle East region especially Israel-Iran. Where in the first case we can discuss about the border city as a triggering factor for deeper cooperation and a space of diversity in the second one the border city represents vulnerability for the security of a state. At the same time given the low level of security, in the second case, the border cities are limited in their actions, since they do not attract investors (foreign or national) fact that has a negative effect over the local economy and thus under a spill over effect affects the social setting. Another important element of a border city is their relative large distance from the capital, fact that generally affects the financial distribution of resources and the concentration of investors and power too far away from them in order to have a positive effect. This distribution generated a relative isolation, but once the globalisation and the progressive opening of borders took place, new opportunities arose and new economic and social opportunities emerged<sup>15</sup>. In order to develop in a sustainable manner, border cities started to develop their own strategies by partnering with different local authorities from across the border so that they would transform themselves from “border cities” to “interface cities”<sup>16</sup>, so that the presence of border is no longer seen as a vulnerability in terms of security, but an asset that can take the form of different kinds of cooperation from infrastructure to socially, culturally based international projects.

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<sup>13</sup> Saskia Sassen, “The City: Today’s Frontier Zone,” *Glocalism: Journal Of Culture, Politics and Innovation* (2014): 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Antoine Decoville et al., „Opportunities of Cross-border Cooperation between Small and Medium Cities in Europe,” *Report Written in the Frame of the Spatial Development Observatory, on Behalf of the Department of Spatial Planning and Development – Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructure in Luxembourg*, LISER (2015): 6, accessed August 20, 2015, [http://www.dat.public.lu/eu-presidency/Events/Workshop-3/Opportunities-of-cross-border-cooperation-between-small-and-medium-cities-in-Europe-\\_LISER\\_.pdf](http://www.dat.public.lu/eu-presidency/Events/Workshop-3/Opportunities-of-cross-border-cooperation-between-small-and-medium-cities-in-Europe-_LISER_.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

Next we will analyse the different types of border and frontier cities in order to emphasize the differences between them, the issues with which they confront themselves, the opportunities that arise, their effect over the national and regional security, etc. The distinction comes as a leitmotiv for the present study, since it offers the geographical / cultural / ethnical characteristics of a city. These elements affect in an automatically manner the development of that respective city. On one hand we will analyse the frontier cities, which often present internal frontiers that separate the city, and on the other we make reference to border cities, which have external frontiers that separates not only them from other cities, but two separate, independent, sovereign states. Hence, whereas the firsts have to look for internal solutions, but the latter must search for external ones in order to reach out their goals.

### ***Borders cities***

The European Union presented itself with new important opportunities regarding the border cities / regions. The four liberties (persons, capital, goods, and services) transformed the closed borders of its member states into an internal free market, which enhanced the bilateral and multilateral cooperation, not only between the states, but also between the cities.

The cross border cooperation was regularised through the Outline Convention of Madrid from 1980, which provided a legal basis for the agreements between the member states. According to Article 2 of the Convention, “transfrontier co-operation shall mean any concerted action designed to reinforce and foster neighbourly relations between territorial communities or authorities within the jurisdiction of two or more Contracting Parties and the conclusion of any agreement and arrangement necessary for this purpose”<sup>17</sup>. Another legal tool which enforced the importance of cross border cooperation is the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation from 2006, which represents the „first European cooperation structure with a legal personality defined by European Law”<sup>18</sup>. From its beginning it was designed to support and promote the cooperation between the EU member states at the level of: cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation, with the main objective of fostering the economic and social cohesion of the European territory<sup>19</sup>. At the level of implementation, from 2007 till 2014 there were implemented projects that amount approximately € 60 million<sup>20</sup>, fact that represents a relative negative dynamic of the initiative, given the large amount of domains in which the eligible actors can apply.

Within the next chapter we will analyse the following situations: cities divided by borders; cities which mark a border; cities which mark a border region and enclave cities.

### ***Cities divided by borders***

An example is this case could be the city of Nicosia. The capital of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicosia is divided between the North, that is the Turkish Cypriot and the

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<sup>17</sup> “European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities,” Madrid, 21.V.1980, Article 2, accessed September 5, 2015, <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/106.htm>.

<sup>18</sup> “European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation,” accessed September 5, 2015, <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/about/Pages/What%20is%20the%20EGTC.aspx>.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Jürgen Pucher and Stefanie Zöchmann, „EGTC Monitoring Report 2014 Implementing the Strategy Europe 2020,” *Committee of Regions*, European Union (2015): 6, accessed September 5, 2015, [http://cor.europa.eu/en/documentation/studies/Documents/EGTC\\_MonitoringReport\\_2014.pdf](http://cor.europa.eu/en/documentation/studies/Documents/EGTC_MonitoringReport_2014.pdf).

South, which is inhabited by the Greek Cypriots. Whereas the latter is the capital of Cyprus and the place where the government is located, the north represents the capital of the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus”, which declared its independency in 1983, but it was not recognized internationally. This division, which is enforced by the presence of the Turkish army in the north, led to major population dislocations: approximately 175.000 Greek Cypriots were displaced from the North, while 40.000 Turkish Cypriots from the south to the north. The tangible border of the city is represented by the Green Line, which was established in 1974 by the UN, and imposes physical crossing of the Greeks to the north and for the Turks to the south without special permission. This division tends to increase the already present antagonism between the majority (the Greeks) who feel threatened by the minority and the geographical neighbourhood with Turkey and the minority (the Turks) that feel threatened by the majority. In this way there will emerge a situation in which their ethnic identity is augmented by this dichotomy, no one agreeing to the *de facto* separation as an acceptable status quo, leaving no space for actual cooperation. The accent on the separation as a possible solution to the ethnic conflict is automatically affecting the development of the city, creating major discrepancies between the north and the south<sup>21</sup>.

#### *Cities which mark a border*

Giurgiu-Ruse, two cities that once were part of a single city belonging to the Bulgarian state, they are now two EU cities that are divided by the Danube. After Giurgiu became part of the Romanian state, the interactions between the two went to a much lower level. During the communist regime, the interactions increased to a moderated level, since there were people which crossed the border for shopping reasons. Neither the fact that in 2007 the two states became part of the EU changed the status quo<sup>22</sup>.

The main reasons may be:

- The lack of infrastructure, the bridge that connects the two cities being under construction for years, especially in the Romanian sector. In order to increase the interaction level both states wanted to construct a second bridge, but they did not agree on its position. On one side, Romania wanted to construct it near Constanta, so that people travelling it in their way towards Turkey or Greece should spend more time in Romania. On the other side, Bulgaria wanted to construct it near Sofia, for the same reasons<sup>23</sup>. In 2010 both states decided to build a bridge between Calafat and Vidin. Although the project met with several challenges, which put under question mark its development, it became operational and in 2014, especially, during the holiday's season, the bridge is crossed by approximately 7000 cars which travel towards Greece<sup>24</sup>.

- Immediately after their accession to the EU, we could identify numerous Bulgarian companies that tried to enter the Romanian market, the latter being four times

<sup>21</sup> Scott A. Bollens, “City and Soul. Sarajevo, Johannesburg, Jerusalem, Nicosia,” *CITY* 5, 2 (Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2001): 183-185.

<sup>22</sup> “Challenges of Cross Border Cooperation in Romania and Bulgaria,” 15 August 2011, accessed August 15, 2015, <https://criticalgeography.wordpress.com/2011/08/15/challenges-of-cross-border-cooperation-in-romania-and-bulgaria/>.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> „Trafic de trei ori mai intens pe podul Calafat-Vidin” [Three times more intense traffic on the Calafat-Vidin bridge], *Digi24*, 10 August 2014, accessed August 15, 2015, <http://www.digi24.ro/Stiri/Digi24/Actualitate/Stiri/Trafic+de+trei+ori+mai+intens+pe+podul+Calafat-Vidin>.

the size of Bulgaria's. But soon the economic crisis erupted and the Romanian economy depreciated enough so that they did not find enough opportunities to continue to invest<sup>25</sup>.

- The prices are relatively the same, so that cross-border shopping is not really profitable. Additionally, neither of the two states are part of the Schengen area<sup>26</sup>.

#### *Cities which mark a border region*

„Border regions are areas of contact between territorial systems with various political, cultural, economic and institutional heritages”<sup>27</sup>. As previously mentioned along history there were periods in which the borders were relatively impenetrable, fact that affected the development of these regions, since the flow of goods, persons, services, capital were relatively low. At the same time, being perceived as vulnerable points for the security of the state, these regions were not attracting enough investors. Moreover, as aforementioned, the capitals were attracting the highest degree of the GDP, the border regions lacking of a suitable degree of national investments. To all these economic and military security negative elements, the border regions were confronting with the different identities that existed along the border, thus “improving the feeling of the inhabitants to belong to a common territory is an important as well as complex task”<sup>28</sup>. These aspects started to change with the development of the European Union, moment in which its member states started to trust each other more, given the high level of economic integration and exchanges that were brought by the single market.

An example of border region could be the Bihor – Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion which has been created in 2002 by the County Council and the Self-governing Hajdú-Bihar<sup>29</sup>.

The main objectives of this Euroregion are: „to maintain and develop the relations of good neighbourhood; to identify the possible fields for cross-border cooperation; to organize and coordinate those activities that promote members’ socially, economically, culturally, educationally cooperation, to preserve their health, environment and tourism; to implement some precise programmes in the fields of common interest; to promote cooperation relations between the inhabitants and the specialists who work in different activity fields of common interest; to promote the cooperation of the Euroregion with other international organizations; to prepare together some projects in order to obtain financial funds from the European Union”<sup>30</sup>.

As it can be observed the objects start from the internal level of the region and end with the external one. Firstly, it emphasizes the necessity to create a suitable regional framework in which the parties find common interests and opportunities in several fields in which they can cooperate and only then, it promotes the cooperation between it and other regions, proposing a bottom-up approach that starts from the individual level.

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<sup>25</sup> „Challenges of Cross Border Cooperation.”

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Decoville et al., 11.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> István Süli-Zakar, “The Role of the Euroregions and Eurometropolises in the Etherealization of the Borders in the Eastern Periphery of the European Union,” in *Eurotimes 7, Europe and the Neighbourhood*, ed. Dorin Ioan Dolghi et al. (Oradea: Oradea University Press, Spring 2009), 139-148.

<sup>30</sup> Luminița Șoproni, „The Romanian-Hungarian Cross-border Cooperation in the Regional Press of Bihor County,” in *Eurotimes 3, Media, Intercultural Dialogue and the New Frontiers of Europe*, ed. Fabienne Maron et al. (Oradea: Oradea University Press, Spring 2007), accessed August 10, 2015, [http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/33758/ssoar-eurotimes-2007-3-soproni-The\\_Romanian\\_-\\_Hungarian\\_crossborder.pdf?sequence=1](http://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/33758/ssoar-eurotimes-2007-3-soproni-The_Romanian_-_Hungarian_crossborder.pdf?sequence=1).



At the level of implementation, the aforementioned objectives were implemented within Bihor – Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion. In this sense, we can recall the “Cross-border values in Bihor-Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion” seminar, event that took place in both Romania and Hungary at the same time. The aim of the seminar was to bring together experts from both sides of the border so that they would propose recommendations for a deeper cooperation and communication levels at regional level<sup>31</sup>.

Although the cooperation between the cities comprising this border region is relatively new and their intensity is thus limited, the potential still exists, especially since, for example Oradea and Debrecen<sup>32</sup>, are medium size cities (approximately 200 000 residents), hence encompass a large number of individuals and that they are relatively close to each other (70 km between them). In terms of commuting, the fore mentioned numbers translated at the level of 2012, in a number of 6889 persons who passed the border from Romania to Hungary in order work and 423 from Hungary to Romania. This large difference is explainable by Romania’s lower level of economic development and by the fact that a large part of the workers from Romania where belonging to the Hungarian minority, for the latter group being much easier to find work since they do not meet the language barrier, as in the case of the Hungarians in Romania<sup>33</sup>. This aspect could be dealt with if the Hungarians that were coming to Romania to work were going to Harghita or Covasna, two counties where the official language of the local administration is both Romanian and Hungarian. At the same time the aforementioned counties are ones of the poorest from Romania<sup>34</sup>.

Possible impediments for further cooperation are represented by the facts that: the border dividing the two cities is a non-Schengen border, so that the cross-border of goods, capital, persons and services are still under EU’s border control procedures; the region’s authorities did not develop a territorial development strategy so that they lack a clear medium and long term vision. These impediments can be overcome by the fact that within Romania, there is a large number of Hungarian Minority which could contribute to the future deeper ties between the cities, hence creating common grounds on which they can develop future projects. An already implemented cooperation project are the public transportation lines that link Oradea to Debrecen, responding to the needs of people that cross the border very often or promoting the intensification of such actions<sup>35</sup>.

### *Enclave cities*

An enclave city could be represented by Kaliningrad, a city which was considered a German territory for approximately 700 years, until 1945 when it became part of the Soviet Union. At the level of population, as a traditional strategy, the Soviet authorities decided to deport the German residents. Thus, Kaliningrad was to be inhabited by a mix composed of Ukrainians, Russians and Belarusians. Soon the German architecture was destroyed and replaced by the Soviet style one and the city witnessed a military

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Luminița Șoproni and Ioan Horga, „The Economic Frontiers of Europe,” *Eurolimes* 8, *Europe and Its Economic Frontiers*, ed. Luminița Șoproni et al. (Oradea: Oradea University Press, 2009), 5-6.

<sup>33</sup> Decoville et al., 36.

<sup>34</sup> „BUSINESS CLUB. Cele mai îndatorate județe din România” [Business Club. The most indebted counties from Romania], *Digi24*, 2 March 2015, accessed 15 August 2015, <http://www.digi24.ro/Stiri/Digi24/Economie/Stiri/BUSINESS+CLUB+Cele+mai+indatorate+jude+ete+din+Romania>.

<sup>35</sup> Decoville et al., 36.

isolation<sup>36</sup>. Nowadays this city is surrounded by two EU member states, Poland and Lithuania, hence it is on one hand isolated from the Russian mainland while on the other its residents need visa in order to enter the Polish and Lithuanian territories, even if their final destination is Russia.

Being ruptured from the Russian mainland, Kaliningrad is liable to enter in an economic isolation, since it also lacks the possibility to develop administrative independent bodies that will establish the necessary and stable policies and institutions, elements that are quintessential for foreign investors' attraction. Legally, „the Russian constitution does not precisely define the rights of the 89 federal regions to pursue independent economic and political ties with other nations. Article 72, paragraph 2, of the Russian constitution notes that all subjects of the Russian Federation (respubliki, krai, oblasti, okrygi) have equal rights in the sphere of international ties (mezhdunarodnyie svyazi) and the formation of external economic ties (vneshne-ekonomicheskie svyazi)“<sup>37</sup>. But these elements do not precisely explain what international ties imply and to what degree the economic ties can develop. Do international ties imply diplomatic representation abroad? Are the economic ties restricted to trade agreements?<sup>38</sup>

All this indecisiveness at the legal level coupled with the conflict regarding the free trade zone reinstatement and the internal debate from the Russian Federation regarding the role of the centre and the role of the periphery augment the vulnerable position of the city affecting not only its development, but also its identity<sup>39</sup>.

### ***Frontier cities***

Where in the case of border-states, we could actually identify the demarcation line, in the case of frontier cities they are often invisible lines that still create the same or even a deeper separation between certain identities / groups / persons. Regarding this aspects we will analyse the following types of frontier cities: cities that present frontiers between communities, cities with integrated cultural frontiers and cities with social frontiers.

#### *Cities with frontiers between communities*

Earlier we have analysed the internal dynamics of a city which is divided by borders, Nicosia. In that example the city was split by visible, tangible lines that governed the passing of citizens from the north to the south. In the case of cities that present frontiers between various communities, the separating lines are not tangible or regularised. Rather than that, they are invisible, but possible having a deeper effect of separation than in the first case. An example in this sense could be the city of Sarajevo. Between 1992 and 1996, the tensions between the Bosnian Serbs and the Serbian Militias resulted in ten thousands of deaths and the destruction of almost 60% of the city's buildings. The political solution came with the Dayton accord which officially institutionalised the *de facto* partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Presently, Sarajevo “is [...] a different city, moving from a mixed ethnic population of 540,000 Bosnian Muslims (40%), Bosnian Serbs (30%) and Bosnian Croats

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<sup>36</sup> Brian Vitunic, „Enclave to Exclave: Kaliningrad between Russia and the European Union,” 2, accessed August 10, 2015, <http://ece.columbia.edu/files/ece/images/enclave-1.pdf>; See also Gennady Fedorov, Yuri Rozhkov-Yuryevsky, „The Correlation between the Barrier and Contact Functions of the Kaliningrad Section of the Russian Border,” in *Eurolimes 15, A Security Dimension as Trigger and Result of Frontiers Modifications*, ed. Giuliana Laschi et al. (Oradea: Oradea University Press, Spring 2013), 71-98.

<sup>37</sup> Vitunic, 10.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 10.

(20%) in 1991 to an approximately 80% Muslim city today of about 340,000 population”<sup>40</sup>, hence creating the unseen limits of the city in which NATO’s Stabilization Force (SFOR) are present, trying to ensure the peace, security and stability in the absence of a marked border. Where in the case of Nicosia the actual border was seen as a potential solution to the conflict between the two antagonist parties, in the case of Sarajevo their absence are seen as a possible way of integrating all groups into a single city that will be able to develop a sustainable economic and social system. In this context the main responsibility lays in the hands of politicians who can construct on long term a unique, multicultural environment that will ensure the future development of the city.

#### *Cities with integrated cultural frontiers*

Where regarding the aforementioned cases, Nicosia and Sarajevo, we identified divided cities by visible and invisible limits, in the case of integrated cultural frontiers, cities have succeeded in transforming a diverse cultural society into a multicultural one. One example in this case can be the Romanian city of Timișoara.

Almost 3.000 non-EU migrants were facing with a rigid and unapproachable administrative system. Being aware of the vulnerabilities that can arise from a culturally different environment, the local authorities implemented a project called Migrant in Intercultural Romania (MiIR). The project’s activities were implemented with the aim of reaching a trilateral sustained dialogue between: local authorities that had the solve the local issues by using local resources, national thematic meetings having the aim of adapting the legal system and coming with viable solutions and last, but not least, intercultural mediators that facilitated the communication and the cooperation between all parties. “The MiIR project recorded significant successes in terms of consultation and practical local interventions. Local representatives of the ministries and governments, like the prefecture, local immigration offices or country education inspectors, have managed to implement measures that were deemed necessary during local consultations”<sup>41</sup>. Although the city of Timișoara could have stood as an example for other cases in Romania, the changes that occurred at national level were relatively slow. The project proved to be successful due to the right identification of all relevant local and national actors that had the competences and the power to change the undesired status-quo. Additionally the political will for this change to happen was present in the case of Timișoara, factor which is quintessential for the positive end of the project and its sustainability. At the same time, this element was not met yet neither in the case of Nicosia, nor in the case of Sarajevo.

#### *Cities with social frontiers*

At the same time the ethnicity or the religion are not the only differencing factors that can create intangible limits within cities. The existence of “the other” is more visible than ever given the current migrants from Syria with which the EU is confronting. On one hand, it represents an organisation that fights against human rights’ breach and in this sense it became an active player in the Middle East. On the other hand, it can still be perceived as a fortress, which raises its borders as part of a securitisation behavioural pattern, fact that contradicts with its normative power character. In a situation of crisis like

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<sup>40</sup> Bollens, 171.

<sup>41</sup> Alexandru F. Ghita, “Timișoara Case Study: A New Approach to Integrating non-EU Migrants,” [Interim Report – Part B.1 Study on Promoting Multi-level Governance in Support of Europe 2020], (July 2014): 4, accessed September 15, 2015, [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/mlg\\_cs7.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/mlg_cs7.pdf).

the current migrants one, some European cities will confront with large numbers of refugees that will have to have subsistence resources, shelter, etc. Also they have different identities, other cultural backgrounds aspect that would generate a feeling of separation between the current residents and them. If maintained, this differentiation can generate the city's fragmentation. Therefore, on medium and long term they will have to become an integrated part of the city in order to maintain a unitary or multicultural identity of the city and to not transform the city into a frontier one.

At the same time the economic development of certain groups is also a defining element that can create frontiers within a city, by the development of poor and rich districts. The economic disparities tend to be viewed as natural consequences. Once the industrialisation process has started and activities changed from agricultural based to industrialised ones, the population became more and more urban and inequalities tend to exist until the income rises to a level where all members of that specific society reach a common standard living. This logic could be applied also to large cities. As they grow larger and larger, they encompass a larger population and the economic disparities tend to be more visible, than in the case of small cities<sup>42</sup>.

Many EU and non-EU cities have been divided by the invisible economic development, where the south is poor and feels socially excluded and the north that is rich and it is perceived as the majority which influences the policy. This case can also apply to the current migrants' crisis. Many of the refugees are people with low income that are leaving their countries from security reasons. In this context, receiving large numbers of refugees will affect the economic development of the city and of the state.

### ***Conclusions***

Regardless of the current international development and the globalisation's effect, we still face physical and symbolic borders / frontiers. The development of economic free trade areas facilitated the lift of tangible border controls, but at simultaneously it led to the emergence of different kinds of frontiers.

Last, but not least, we must not forget that the EU's borders have been under constant change. Thus, the enlargement process could have been viewed as major opportunity for border cities that faced important chances regarding the market access. For example, when Romania became an EU member state, cities that are very close to the border, like Oradea had greater opportunities than for cities that are further away from the border like Craiova. Once the lines shift, border cities tend to increase their attractiveness for investors as analysed above. But at the same time, the border is still viewed as a burden<sup>43</sup> especially when that respective city is at the external border and the regional dynamics are affecting the security level in a negative way. Regarding this last aspect, Suceava felt the negative effects of the Ukrainian crisis, given their geographical neighbourhood with border cities like Cernăuți (aprox. 84 km). Another aspect is related to the effects of the border, which are relatively limited, around 70km. Moreover, the

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<sup>42</sup> UN-HABITAT, „The Economic Divide: Urban Income Inequalities,” *State of the World's Cities* (2010/2011): 78, accessed September 1, 2015, [http://www.unhabitat.org/jo/en/inp/Upload/2233036\\_pages%20from%20Report-Englishrd-2.pdf](http://www.unhabitat.org/jo/en/inp/Upload/2233036_pages%20from%20Report-Englishrd-2.pdf).

<sup>43</sup> Steven Brakman et al., “The Border Effect of EU Integration: Evidence for European Cities and Regions,” 20, accessed August 20, 2015, [http://www.ihs.nl/fileadmin/ASSETS/ihs/Marketing/Marketing\\_Projects/marrewijk\\_brakman\\_garretsen\\_borders\\_and\\_remoteness\\_dec\\_2010e.pdf](http://www.ihs.nl/fileadmin/ASSETS/ihs/Marketing/Marketing_Projects/marrewijk_brakman_garretsen_borders_and_remoteness_dec_2010e.pdf).

studies show that the effect, where is present, does not last in long term, being about maximum 30 years<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 20-21.

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